

Psalm 119 (verses 121-136)

AIN
"I am thy servant"

Verses 121-128: Happy is the man, who, acting upon gospel principles, does justice to all around. Christ our Surety, having paid our debt and ransom, secures all the blessings of salvation to every true believer. The psalmist expects the word of God's righteousness, and no other salvation than what is secured by that word, which cannot fall to the ground. We deserve no favor from God; we are most easy when we cast ourselves upon God's mercy, and refer ourselves to it. If any man resolves to do God's will as his servant, he shall be made to know his testimonies. We must do what we can for the support of religion, and, after all, must beg of God to take the work into his own hands. It is hypocrisy to say we love God's commandments more than our worldly interests. The way of sin is a false way, being directly contrary to God's precepts, which are right: those that love and esteem God's law, hate sin, and will not be reconciled to it.

Psalm 119:121 "I have done judgment and justice: leave me not to mine oppressors.

AIN: The Sixteenth Part.

As king of Israel; which is the character given of him (2 Sam. 8:15). And in which he was a type of Christ (Jer. 23:5). And as a private person; which is everyone's duty, and every good man especially will be desirous of performing it. It is not indeed perfectly done by any, and therefore not to be trusted to; nor was it so done by David. Nor did he place his confidence in it. Or did he say this in a boasting way, but in defense of himself and his innocence against those who oppressed him with their defamatory statements, as appears from the next clause. The Syriac version takes it to be an address to God, and as describing him, "O thou that doest judgment and justice!" to whom the following petition is directed.

"Leave me not to mine oppressors": David had his oppressors, as all good men have, and power was on their side. But they could do no more, nor further exercise it, than as they were permitted by the Lord. For they had no power but what was given them from above. And he applies to God, and not men, for relief; and deprecates being given up to them, and left in their hands.

I have mentioned before in these verses from the 119th Psalm that I believe David to be the penman. Saul had been the first of the kings of Israel, and he had done things very displeasing unto God in the last of his reign.

1 Samuel 28:7 "Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, [there is] a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor."

You see, instead of consulting with God, he had turned to a witch for advice. Saul was evil in the sight of God. David was the opposite of Saul. David had no counselors except God. David was a

good king and judged the people with God's kind of justice. David's only sins against God was taking Bath-sheba when she was another man's wife, and having her husband, Uriah, killed so that he could marry her. In David's whole lifetime, his heart was stayed upon God. He had done good to the people he reigned over and had tried to live exactly the way God would have him to live. Here, David has come to the only place there had ever been help for him. He came to God for help. David always upheld God's Word, and he knew God had never let him down either.

Psalm 119:122 "Be surety for thy servant for good: let not the proud oppress me."

The psalmist was, in a like case with Hezekiah, oppressed. And therefore, desires the Lord would undertake for him, appear on his side, and defend him (Psalm 38:14). And if God himself is the surety of his people, and engages in their behalf, they need fear no enemy. What David prays to God to be for him, that Christ is for all his people (Heb. 7:22). He drew nigh to God, struck hands with him, gave his word and bond to pay the debts of his people. And put himself in their legal place and stead, and became responsible to law and justice for them. He engaged to make satisfaction for their sins, and to bring in everlasting righteousness for their justification. To preserve and keep them, and bring them safe to eternal glory and happiness. And this was being a surety for them for good. The Syriac version is, "delight that servant with good things"; and to the same sense the Targum and Kimchi interpret it. But Jarchi and Aben Ezra take the word to have the same meaning we do. And so Aquila and Theodotion translate it: the sense Arama gives is, "be surety for thy servant, that I may be good."

"Let not the proud oppress me": The oppressors of God's people are generally proud. They are such who deal in proud wrath. It is in their pride, and owing to it, they persecute them (Psalm 10:2). This has been their character in all ages, and agrees with the man of sin and his followers, who is king over all the children of pride. But wherein such men deal proudly and oppress, God is higher than they, and therefore most proper to be applied unto.

He is asking God to be his security here. You could have no better security than God. That is just what the Lord Jesus did for all the believers. The proud are not just the enemy of David, but they rejected God, and they are His enemy as well. You stand good for me, is another way to say what David is asking here.

Psalm 119:123 "Mine eyes fail for thy salvation, and for the word of thy righteousness."

For temporal salvation or deliverance from oppressors. And for spiritual salvation, for views of an interest in it, and the joys and comforts of it. And for the Messiah, the author of it; whom he was looking wistfully for, but, not coming as soon as expected. His eyes were tired and weary, and ready to fail, and his heart to faint (see note on Psalm 119:81).

"And for the word of thy righteousness": For the word of promise, which the righteousness or faithfulness of God was engaged to perform. Or for the law of God, the rule of righteousness, and which shows what righteousness God requires. And for the bringing in of that righteousness of the Messiah, which could answer its demands. Or for the Gospel, and more clear administration of it, which is called the word of righteousness (Heb. 5:13). In which the righteousness of God is revealed; the righteousness which Christ. Who is God as well as man,

has wrought out; and which his Father has approved of, accepted, and imputes to his people, and justifies them with. And which word also teaches men to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

His eyes fail means that he has been looking so intently waiting to see his salvation that he can barely hold his eyes open any longer. David wants to hear the righteous Word of God speak up for him against his oppressors. You could also look at this prophetically, and say that we too, get to the point that it seems we are about to go under. We cry out for salvation. Sometimes we look and look, before we see the salvation in our life.

Psalm 119:124 "Deal with thy servant according unto thy mercy, and teach me thy statutes."

Not according to justice, for sinners as we are, we can never urge that as a plea before God. No man who knows himself could ask of God to deal with him according to the strict and stern principles of justice. But we may ask him to deal with us according to mercy, for mercy is our only plea. And the mercy of God, vast and boundless, constitutes such a ground of appeal as we need. No man can have any other; no man need desire any other.

"And teach me thy statutes" (see notes at Psalm 119:12). Show thy mercy to me in teaching me thy law.

Notice David calls himself, thy servant. He has made his commitment to God, and he will not go back on it. He asks for God's mercy. He says, after you have forgiven me by your mercy, teach me thy statutes.

Psalm 119:125 "I [am] thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies."

Not only by creation, but by grace. And as he had a work to do, he desires to know what it was. And as it was proper he should know his Master's will, he applies to him for it. Using this as an argument, that he was his servant, devoted to his service, and willing to perform it to the best of his knowledge and ability; and therefore prays:

"Give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies": The Scriptures, which testify of the will of God. Which are only rightly understood by those who have their understandings opened and enlightened. Or have an understanding given them, that they may understand them, so as to receive and embrace the doctrine, and do the precepts of them. And such an understanding is the gift of God, and owing to his powerful and efficacious grace (see Luke 24:45).

I hear many people say that they have read the Bible, and still do not know what it is saying. The Holy Spirit of God reveals the meaning to those who diligently seek out the Word. We must pray and ask God to open our understanding, as David is asking here. David's desire is to serve God. He wants the Spirit of God to be his Teacher that he might understand more fully.

Psalm 119:126 "[It is] time for [thee], LORD, to work: [for] they have made void thy law."

The prophet shows that when the wicked have brought all things to confusion, and God's word to utter contempt, then it is God's time to help and send the remedy.

"For they have made void thy law": They have broken it. They have set it at defiance. They regard and treat it as if it had no claim to obedience; as if it were a thing of naught. This the psalmist urges as a reason for the putting forth of power to arrest the evil. To bring people to repentance; to secure the salvation of souls. By all the evil done when the law of God is set at naught, by all the desirableness that the law should be obeyed, by all the danger to the souls of people from its violation. This prayer may now and at all times be offered, and that with earnestness (compare Psalm 119:136).

When David asks the LORD to work here, he is saying, intervene on my behalf. David has done all he can do to make things better with these people, and all the things he has done have been to no avail. Now he says, Do it for me LORD. They have not only been opposed to David, but were trying to do away with the law of God as well.

Psalm 119:127 "Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold."

Because he was the Lord's servant, as Aben Ezra; or rather because the wicked made void the law. His love was the more inflamed and increased towards it by the contempt it was had in by others; he preferred it;

"Above gold": Yea, above fine gold; or gold of Phez, a place where the best gold was. As was thought. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions render it "the topaz"; and the Syriac and Arabic versions, "precious stones" or "gems" (see Psalm 119:72).

Gold was the most expensive metal at this time and David knew just how valuable it was, because he had so much of it. All of the gold stacked up had not been able to free him from this problem. David knew that the commandments of God were not to be compared with earthly things like gold. David would have given all the gold in his possession, if necessary, for the commandments. David did give a tremendous fortune of gold and silver for the use in building the temple in Jerusalem.

Psalm 119:128 "Therefore I esteem all [thy] precepts [concerning] all [things to be] right; [and] I hate every false way."

He had an impartial regard to all the commandments of God; and valued one as well as another, and walked according to all of them. Making no difference either in his affection or practice between one and another, as being more or less necessary, just, and right. He had an equal respect to the lighter and weightier matters of the law. And, like Zacharias and Elisabeth, walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Looking upon them all, with respect to everything commanded or forbidden by them, to be just and equitable.

"And I hate every false way": Every command, institution, and ordinance of men, which are opposed to the will of God. Every false way of worship, all superstition and idolatry; and every

false doctrine whatsoever is contrary to the testimonies and word of God. And indeed where there is a true love of the word, worship, and ordinances of God, there must be a hatred of these.

Since these ungodly people around David tried to destroy the law of God in a previous verse, we see David upholding it even more. David put the laws of God above everything, except God Himself. David knew that God and His law were absolute truth. David learned well the teaching of God, and he knew that anything false was from the devil himself. David's hate for the false way was really a righteous hate.

PE

“The entrance of thy words giveth light”

Verses 129-138: God offers of life's greatest wonders: the inner “light” that gives understanding even to the unlearned person. Brokenhearted over those who do not “keep” God's “law”; the psalmist uses “mouth” metaphors to suggest his great appetite for God's commandments.

Verses 129-136: The wonders of redeeming love will fix the heart in adoration of them. The Scriptures show us what we were, what we are, and what we shall be. They show us the mercy and the justice of the Lord, the joys of heaven, and the pains of hell. Thus, they give to the simple, in a few days, understanding of those matters, which philosophers for ages sought in vain. The believer, wearied with the cares of life and his conflicts with sin, pants for the consolations conveyed to him by means of the sacred word. And every one may pray, “Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name” (verse 132). We must beg that the Holy Spirit would order our steps. The dominion of sin is to be dreaded and prayed against by everyone. The oppression of men is often more than flesh and blood can bear; and He who knoweth our frame, will not refuse to remove it in answer to the prayers of his people. Whatever obscurity may appear as to the faith of the Old Testament believers, their confidence at the throne of grace can only be explained by their having obtained more distinct views of gospel privileges, through the sacrifices and services of their law, than is generally imagined. Go to the same place, plead the name and merits of Jesus, and you will not, you cannot plead in vain. Commonly, where there is a gracious heart, there is a weeping eye. Accept, O Lord, the tears our blessed Redeemer shed in the days of his flesh, for us who should weep for our brethren or ourselves.

Psalm 119:129 "Thy testimonies [are] wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them."

PE: The Seventeenth Part.

This commences a new division of the psalm, indicated by the Hebrew letter Pe (פ p), corresponding to our "p." The meaning of the expression here is, that the laws of God, the revelations of his will, are adapted to fill the mind with wonder. The mind is awed by their wisdom; their comprehensiveness; their extent; their spirituality; their benevolence. By the fact that laws are framed, so perfectly adapted to the end; so well suited to secure order, and to promote happiness.

"Therefore doth my soul keep them": Because they are so surpassingly wise and benevolent; because they are so manifestly the work of wisdom and goodness.

Testimonies, in the verse above, has to do with witness. The wonderful witness of the Word (Jesus Christ), turned the believing world upside down. David is saying, that the Word is so wonderful, is why he keeps them. We can say with David, that the Bible is so wonderful. You can read the same Scripture a thousand times and find something brand new every time you read it. The Word of God is alive. The same Word that ministered to people a thousand years ago is still current today. The Bible is more current than your daily newspaper. I could go on and on, but that is wonderful enough for me to desire to live by it.

Psalm 119:130 "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple."

"Light ... understanding": Refers to illumination in comprehending the meaning of Scripture.

When you read and study the Word of God (Bible), it is like an electric light bulb of understanding goes off in your mind. The Word sheds Light on every aspect of life. It is so strange to me, that people who never went beyond the second grade in school are the very people who understand the meaning of the Scriptures better than some college graduates. The understanding is a gift from God. This understanding is not accumulated learning in school. Jesus taught a simple message of salvation. One of the problems today is that we complicate it with big words, thinking that makes us look intelligent.

Psalm 119:131 "I opened my mouth, and panted: for I longed for thy commandments."

"Panted": As after God Himself (compare Psalm 42:1-2).

This Scripture reminds me of the Scripture that speaks of hungering and thirsting after righteousness.

Matthew 5:6 "Blessed [are] they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

David is so diligently seeking the teachings of God, that it is as if he is out of breath for the search.

Psalm 119:132 "Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name."

Turn not away from me. Regard me with thy favor.

"And be merciful unto me, as thou usest to do unto those that love thy name": Margin, "According to the custom toward those," etc. The Hebrew word is "judgment:" "According to the judgment to the lovers of thy name." The word seems here to be used in the sense of "right;" of what is due; or of what is usually determined. That is, as God usually determines, judges, acts

toward those who love him. The idea is, treat me according to the rules which regulate the treatment of thy people. Let me be regarded as one of them, and be dealt with accordingly. On the sentiment in this passage (see notes at Psalm 106:4).

Those that love the name of God and His teachings, can get audience with God at any time. David is asking for the mercy, he has been reading about, to be available to him. This is like saying, may I have your attention for a moment. David does not want God to turn away from him.

Psalm 119:133 "Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me."

My goings, or my conduct and life by thy word; according to thy requirements. Let me be wholly obedient to thy will.

"And let not any iniquity have dominion over me (see notes at Psalm 19:13). The prayer is, that no form of sin, that no wicked passion or propensity, might be allowed to rule over him. He who is willing that any one sin should rule in his heart, though he should be free from all other forms of sin, cannot be a pious man (see notes at James 2:10).

Show me, in your Word, what you would have me to do. David is asking God to protect him from temptations. Let me study your Word, and let it direct me away from temptation, would be another way of saying this.

Psalm 119:134 "Deliver me from the oppression of man: so will I keep thy precepts."

From constraint on the part of man, so that I may be free to act as I please. Give me true religious liberty, and let me not be under any compulsion or constraint. The word rendered "deliver" is that which is usually rendered "redeem." It is used here in the large sense of deliverance; and the prayer is an expression of what the true friends of religion have always sought, desired, and demanded. "Freedom" of opinion, the richest blessing which man can enjoy.

"So will I keep thy precepts": My heart inclines to that; I desire it; and, if suffered to act without constraint, I will do it. As it is the purpose and the wish of my soul, I pray that all hindrances to the free exercise of my religion may be removed. How often has this prayer been offered in times of persecution! By how many millions of the dwellers on the earth might it even now be offered! What a blessing it is to those who are free from oppressive laws, that they are permitted to carry out the wishes of their hearts, and to worship God according to the dictates of their conscience, with none to molest them or make them afraid.

It is a fact that some men who attack us so bitterly, sometimes cause us to sin, when we get angry with them. Moses is a very good example of that, when the people had so angered him, that he disobeyed God and struck the Rock instead of speaking to it. David is saying here, that if God would remove the oppression from these men, he could better keep God's precepts. He would not be feeling so much anger toward them, which might cause him to sin.

Psalm 119:135 "Make thy face to shine upon thy servant; and teach me thy statutes."

That is, lift up the light of thy countenance on me. favor me with thy gracious presence, and communion with thyself. Manifest thyself unto me, and shed abroad thy love in my heart. Cause the sun of righteousness to arise upon me, and commune with me, from above thy mercy seat. Restore to me the joys of thy salvation, and let me have the comforts of thy good Spirit. This prayer is a part of the blessing of the High Priest (Num. 6:25).

"And teach me thy statutes": The more communion a man has with God, the more desirous he is of learning and doing his will. This is a frequent petition (see Psalm 119:124).

If God looks upon him, not with gloom and a solemn face, then he says, He made His face to shine upon me. David is speaking as if this shining down upon him will open his knowledge to the statutes of God. Perhaps, the following Scripture can say it better than I can.

2 Corinthians 4:6 "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to [give] the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

David is saying, shine your Light in my heart, and let Your Spirit open up my knowledge of the glory of God.

Psalm 119:136 "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law."

"Rivers of waters": The psalmist is brought to sobbing over the sin of others. My heart is sad, and my eyes pour forth floods of tears. It is not a gentle weeping, but my eyes are like a fountain which pours out full-flowing streams (see Jer. 9:1). "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears," etc. (compare Jer. 14:17; Lam. 1:16; 2:18).

"Because they keep not thy law": The persons are not mentioned, but must be understood of wicked men. Whose open and impudent transgression of the law in innumerable instances, and in the most flagrant manner, gave the psalmist great distress, as it does all good men. Because the law of God is despised, his authority is trampled on, his name is dishonored, and he has not the glory which is due unto him.

David is weeping so much over the lost people around him that his tears are like a river. David is not only weeping for the lost people, but he is also, weeping for God's law, which has been taken so lightly. So many times, I have cried out myself, why do they not understand and keep your law, God? I suppose this is what is called a pastor's heart. David, and those who really are concerned about the lost people of the world around them, have a loving and caring heart. Many a mother has cried and prayed to God for her lost children. Don't you know it breaks God's heart to see His creation taking the Word of God so lightly?

Psalm 119 (121-136) Questions

1. I have done _____ and _____: leave me not to mine oppressors.

2. Who does the author believe to be the penman here?
3. What evil council did Saul seek?
4. Who was David's only counselor?
5. What was the blemish in David's walk with God?
6. David always upheld God's _____.
7. What is David saying, when he asks God to be surety for him?
8. Who are the proud the enemy of?
9. What is meant by, mine eyes fail for thy salvation?
10. How does David want God to deal with him?
11. What did David call himself in verse 124?
12. What did David want understanding for?
13. What reveals the meaning of the Scriptures to one seeking to know the meaning?
14. What is David saying, when he asks God to work in verse 126?
15. He said he loved what above gold?
16. What was the most expensive metal in David's time?
17. Anything false is of the _____.
18. Thy testimonies are _____.
19. Who turned the believing world upside down?
20. What does the author believe is wonderful about reading the Word?
21. The entrance of thy _____ giveth light.
22. Strangely enough, who seems to understand the meaning of Scriptures better than the college graduates?
23. Why is this so?
24. David is so diligently seeking the teachings of God, that it seems like he is doing what?
25. Who can get audience with God any time?
26. Order my steps in thy _____.

27. Deliver me from the _____ of man.

28. Make thy _____ to shine upon thy servant.

29. What are 2 reasons David is weeping a river of tears?